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'Deeply Affordable Housing' Coming to Harlem African Burial Site, City Says

By Dartunorro Clark (/www.dnainfo.com/new-york/about-us/our-team/editorial-team/dartunorro-clark) | March 9, 2017 2:20pm

 @DartDClark (<http://twitter.com/DartDClark>)



The city is planning to develop a former African burial ground into a memorial and affordable housing.

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EAST HARLEM — A former bus depot built on a historic African burial ground (<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20100319/manhattan/mta-pledges-archaeological-probe-into-east-harlem-african-burial-ground>) will become “deeply affordable housing” for residents in the neighborhood, the city announced Wednesday.

Both the city's Economic Development Corporation and Department of Housing and Preservation laid out specific affordability levels for a portion of the approximately 730 units planned for the massive East 126th Street project.

The city said it's "committed" to earmarking 150 units for families of three making \$24,500 or less annually, as well as approximately 220 units for families making no more than 80 percent of the area median income.

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neighborhood

An HPD spokeswoman said more details on the units will come as the project undergoes a multi-step review process.

"Today's commitment means that 20 percent of the housing in this project will be accessible to families hit hardest by the affordability crisis facing our city," said EDC president James Patchett in a statement.

The site, at East 126th Street and First Avenue, was formerly used as a bus depot (<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20160908/east-harlem/historic-african-burial-ground-become-housing-city-says>) by the MTA.

Many details of the project have yet to be determined, but the city said it is looking to develop about 1 million square feet of the area.

This past September, the EDC hosted a public meeting (<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20160916/east-harlem/memorial-central-development-on-harlem-african-burial-ground-city-says>) along with the two community task forces that will advise on the project, at which residents raised concerns about what the affordability of the units would be.

The development is currently undergoing the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP), in which the local community board, borough president and City Council will evaluate the plan.

There's no indication of the height of the project since it is still in the preliminary stages.

The heart of the development will be a memorial honoring the burial ground (<https://www.dnainfo.com/new-york/20160916/east-harlem/memorial-central-development-on-harlem-african-burial-ground-city-says>), which was discovered in the early 2000s and holds the remains of free and enslaved people of African descent.

The city started work in 2015 to preserve the site.

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